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EVERYONE MUST ESTABLISH THE IDEOLOGY OF

"AGRICULTURE IS BASIC"

- COMMUNIST CHINA -

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## FOREWORD

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## EVERYONE MUST ESTABLISH THE IDEOLOGY OF "AGRICULTURE IS BASIC"

[Following is a translation of a discussion  
article in Pei-ching Jih-pao, (Peiping Daily)  
9 August 1960, page 3.]

Recently the people of Peiping Municipality implemented the policy of "Agriculture is Basic". With the summons of the Party, the people in the city shoulder to shoulder with the people of the country waged several struggles, overcame many difficulties and finally achieved complete victories in their rush to plant and hoe. It is evident that if the "Agriculture is Basic" policy is thoroughly understood, agricultural production will be exceptionally good. If we continue to adhere to this policy, we shall surely rival nature this year and achieve total victory despite the famine, sleet, gale, pests, and other calamities we have suffered.

At present, we have in Peiping many cadres, laborers, and farmers studying the reasons for "Agriculture is Basic". This study is very important, for if everyone learns the reason and each acts according to the policy, we shall certainly improve agricultural production.

### Why "Agriculture is Basic"

Why do we say that agriculture is basic for the development of the national economy? The national economy includes industry, agriculture, transportation, business, education, science, cultural and other enterprises. Following are several reasons why agriculture is basic for the development of the national economy.

1. Agriculture produces foodstuffs, cotton, vegetables, and meats. It solves the people's problem of eating and clothing. All of the 600 million people must eat and wear clothes. Eating and clothing are the important things in people's lives. In the old society, laboring people worried

about food and clothing throughout the year, and in case of famine, there were bound to be people who froze and starved to death. After the liberation, there was great development in agricultural production. Life was better day by day, but our roots were too shallow. When the living standard was raised, the industrial population increased, and the development of production could not match the demand. Also, we could not completely overcome natural calamities and every year there were many places which suffered severe disasters. Consequently, food was still not abundant. To guarantee and constantly raise the living standard of the people, we must greatly develop agriculture and produce enough foodstuffs and other agricultural products.

2. Agriculture also solves a great part of the "food" problem of industry--that is, by supplying industry with raw materials. Like textile mills which cannot operate without cotton. The mills can only turn out sufficient cloth when they have sufficient cotton. According to national statistics, about 80% of raw materials for light industry are agricultural products; and part of raw material for heavy industry also comes from the farms. Whether there is a rich harvest or bad harvest in agriculture directly affects the rate of development of industrial production in the following year. In 1958, industrial production increased by 66%, in 1959 by 40%, the rate of increase was extraordinarily fast. The main reasons, of course, are the general line of socialist construction guided by the Party, the "great leap forward," and the people's communes; but the fact that 1957 and 1958 were our rich harvest years, abundance of raw materials for industry, and booming markets also constitute important factors.

3. The rural areas are big customers for industrial goods. Farmers not only need vast quantities of daily industrial goods such as clothing, towels, rubber shoes, and thermos bottles, but they also demand heavy industry goods. At present, there are large quantities of tractors, donkey engines (kuo-t'ao chi), machine tools and other machines transported from cities to farms each year. In the future when the farms are greatly mechanized, electrified, and equipped with irrigation facilities and chemical fertilizer, the demand for heavy industry products will increase year by year.

4. Agriculture helps the nation accumulate capital for construction. The capital for construction of socialism mainly depends on amassment from industry; farmers supply only a small portion of tax to the nation, but the processing and distribution of agricultural products helps the nation's

accumulation of capital greatly. Many light industries such as the textile industry has a close relationship with agriculture. When agriculture supplies more raw materials, there is also more in the capital of light industries; when agriculture can only provide unpredictable amounts of raw materials, there is also little capital for light industry. Consequently, whether agriculture is well organized or not has a great influence on the national income.

5. With the development of agriculture and the corresponding increase in the efficiency of agricultural production, many people can be spared to work in industries or other enterprises. If each farmer in the nation can only provide food for his own consumption, then there can only be agriculture in the nation. There can be no industry, no business, or other industries because everybody has to provide his own food. Of course, each farmer at present produces more than enough for his personal use, but still it is not much. There are 500 million people in the country engaged in food production but still they feel pressure because their labor efficiency still cannot be considered high. If our agriculture used machinery, electricity, and chemical fertilizers, extensively each farmer can produce enough food for dozens of people, and there is no need to have so many people engaged in agriculture. Some could be spared for industry, transportation, business, cultural, educational, and other enterprises.

The five points given above--people's food; raw materials for industry; distribution of industrial goods; the sources of capital for construction; the sources of labor in different enterprises;--cannot be separated from agricultural production. Therefore, we say that agricultural development is basic for the national economy.

We have repeatedly stated that "Agriculture is Basic" and the reason for this is that agriculture is important and that industry is not? Of course not. Chairman Mao states that in developing the national economy, agriculture is basic, with industry in the forefront. Industry and agriculture are like the two legs of a human being. We cannot walk with one leg. We must have two legs to walk. Agriculture is basic, it is important; industry is the guide, it is also very important. In heavy industry, we produce steel, coal, electricity and different kinds of machinery. Tractors, engines, chemical fertilizers which are used in agriculture, are all products of heavy industry. Without heavy industry, there can only be little development of agriculture and we cannot have big development; we can forever use sickles, hoes

and not put technical improvement into practice. When we want to develop agriculture greatly, the most basic procedure is to have technical improvement, achieve mechanization, electrification and water conservation. For this we must have the support of industry.

Recently when we mention development of agriculture first, it is because we have in recent years already established many plants and mines and are comparatively well-off. Agriculture has not yet put into practice technical improvement, its productivity is still lagging behind greatly. Now, we first tackle agriculture in order to develop agriculture productivity greatly and thus, put the development of industry on a more firm basis.

Whether or not agriculture is well attended to does not only affect the problem of food, but it also affects the establishment of socialism. Moreover, when we are self-sufficient in foodstuffs and have reasonably established industry, strengthened national defense and unification of the party, we can face any kind of hardship. Therefore, it is important to develop agriculture. It is the responsibility of each of us to have a good agriculture. We must persist in the policy of "Agriculture is Basic", and struggle and fight for agricultural production.

#### How to Implement the Policy of "Agriculture is Basic" in Work?

After we understand that agriculture is the foundation for the development of the national economy, we should really implement this policy. How do the rural people's communes understand this policy clearly? To produce agricultural goods is the basic responsibility of rural people's communes, to clearly understand the policy of "Agriculture is Basic" is to follow this principle closely and to greatly develop agriculture production.

How then to control agriculture production, to effect great development in agriculture production? Most important is the concentration of the force of leadership at all levels to guide agricultural production, labor, machinery and tools and capital should be assured for the needs of agricultural production. Labor is especially important and the main part must be used in agricultural production. Without this, just to say "Agriculture is Basic" is useless; in our work, attention should be given to development of other enterprises brought out by agriculture and not to concentrate on agriculture at the sacrifice of others.

How do we assure the concentration of the main force



of leadership for agriculture? How do we guarantee that labor, machinery, tools, and capital will first satisfy the needs of agriculture? Our cadres in the communes should handle the three relationships (san-chung kuan-hsi). In dealing with the three relationships they should all maintain the policy of "Agriculture is Basic" within the "framework of foodstuffs". The following is how to properly deal with the three relationships:

1. With present day agricultural production as the basis, plan capital construction (such as water conservation). the immediate benefits of agricultural production and the long-range benefits of capital construction are all good things and should be well taken care of. But in dividing labor and tools, there is a conflict between capital construction and immediate production. In some communes, too much labor is spent in water conservation and hence, a consequent weakening of labor in immediate agricultural production. There is a strong seasonal factor in agricultural production and the farmers are pressed for time. For example, in raising white cabbage, time is lost because of a delay of a few days. In fact, a one day delay will have adverse affects on the harvest. Therefore, we should have a principle in dealing jointly with agricultural production and capital construction; that is, to have agricultural production as basic. It is necessary to have capital construction, but it should not hamper agricultural production.

2. With agriculture production as basic in the communes, industry, forestry, husbandry, subsidiary industry, fishing and other enterprises should be developed. Rural communes include laborers, businessmen, farmers, scholars, and soldiers. They also include farming, forestry, husbandry, subsidiary industry, and fishing. Different industries should be developed fully. But "Birds without heads cannot fly", and in people's communes agriculture is the head. When agriculture is well developed, other enterprises can be developed smoothly.

Take pigs, for example. Pigs can produce fertilizer, which is greatly beneficial to the development of agriculture, but pigs depend on agriculture for feeding. Industry can in no way solve this problem. When the development of agriculture is slow, the rate of producing pigs is also limited. Many items in subsidiary industry also depend on the development of agricultural products. Multi-eared kaoliang, dried maize, etc., can be utilized and made into many products when labor is added. But if agriculture does not plant much kaoliang and maize, it is useless to talk about their

utilization. Therefore, in the commune, the force of guidance, labor, capital and machinery must be first used in agriculture. Of course, when agriculture is basic, this does not mean that all other enterprises are ignored.

In developing various enterprises in people's communes, we have agriculture as basic, and we understand this point. But is it enough just to understand this point? No, it is not enough, and we shall clearly see the policy of "Agriculture is Basic" in establishing industry, forestry, husbandry and fishing. How do we see this policy? There are two main things: 1. Develop the items which service agriculture. For example, agricultural machinery repair and replacement plants, chemical fertilizer plants, raising pigs, etc. 2. To carry out the policy, we should strongly maintain the services to agriculture. We must not only feed the pigs well, but should see to the collection of their fertilizer. In the plants for repair and replacement of agricultural machinery, we should not strive for profits alone, but should greatly help in the technical revolution of agricultural production.

3. With foodstuffs and vegetables as basic, arrange other agricultural products also. There are twelve terms in agricultural production and they are: grain, cotton, oil, hemp, silk, vegetables, sugar, tea, tobacco, fruits, drugs, and miscellaneous grains. To meet the need of the locality, we should set these in order. Suburban districts are important in the production of food and vegetables. It has already been mentioned that although there is a yearly increase in the production of foodstuffs, there is greater increase in the demand by the nation and people. Consequently, production greatly lags behind demand. For the nation to basically solve this food problem, we have to exert much effort. Vegetables affect the diet of millions of urban people. It is also the responsibility of the farmers in suburban areas. When we plan planting we should "within the framework of grain, assure the production of vegetables."

Now is the season for rush planting of white cabbages. When white cabbages are well planted, it is the concrete action of implementing "within the framework of grain assure the production of vegetables". We must concentrate our effort to achieve a victory in this battle. Aside from the problem of what grain and vegetables to plant, we should also assure rich harvests by strengthening field management.

It is very necessary to have whole-phase development of various enterprises in people's communes. We strongly maintain that "Agriculture is Basic", but we do not want a whole-phased development which would weaken other agricultural

enterprises. Our main idea is to separate the main and secondary, to have order, and put various agricultural enterprises in their proper places. When we achieve agriculture as basic, the whole-phase development of various agricultural enterprises, we can then say that communes are truly prosperous.

There are a few comrades in people's communes who forget that the basic responsibility of rural people's communes is the development of agricultural production. They only calculate money and not foodstuffs. They will attend to anything that will produce money quickly and they will cultivate anything that will yield high production and large profits, but they pay no attention to the production of grains and vegetables. They do not care if it is good for agriculture. This is contrary to the policy of "Agriculture is Basic". To do this, makes money come seemingly quick and the profit is not small, but in truth, it is a "gain in sesame and loss in watermelon."

#### All Urban Enterprises Should Support Agriculture

Rural people's communes should understand the policy of "Agriculture is Basic", but do the various business and enterprises in the city also understand this policy? Of course they should. "Agriculture is Basic" is not only the policy for the development of agriculture, it is also the policy of the whole Party and of the whole population. The development of agriculture has a close relationship to industry, communications, and transportation, business, education, science, and cultural activities. Without the development of agriculture, there can be no development in various other enterprises; conversely, without the support of various enterprises, agriculture cannot be developed rapidly. To expedite the development of agriculture, aside from the self-reliance and bitter struggle of the farmers, we should also develop various enterprises which support the popular movement of agriculture.

How do various enterprises support agriculture? To reap rich harvests, agriculture practices technical improvement and needs most the support of people in three ways; they are: man-power; machinery, and technology. The various urban enterprises should give major support in these three ways.

Industry should first support agriculture materially and provide the farms with great numbers of tractors, engines, lathes, chemical fertilizers, drugs, and other different

kinds of farm machinery, and help the rural communes establish small-scale machinery plants and agricultural product factories. But just to give material things is still not enough. Urban enterprises should give full support to agriculture. Laborers should give support to farmers in manpower and technical aid. Factories should send management cadres and technical laborers to help communes train people; farm management of various communes should attend to industry, transfer technology to the farmers, and help them run machinery. Some laborers state "two melons from one source. Laborers and farmers are from one bed. To hasten mechanization of agriculture. Our responsibility is most important." This is well said. In supporting agriculture laborers are the main force and should bear the heaviest responsibility. Labor should give full support from the beginning to the end.

How do communications and transportation enterprises help support agriculture? Workers in these field can expedite shipping to farms machinery from factories, fertilizers and other things supporting agriculture and they can expedite shipping to factories from farms machinery requiring repairs. Furthermore, they can help develop communications and transportation, and raise its efficiency on farms.

Workers in business should have the spirit of "rather have a great deal of bother themselves than to have farmers feel a slight inconveniences," and after their work of supplying and collecting, they can support agriculture. Agricultural production needs machinery, chemical fertilizers, raw materials for commune industries, fuel and daily necessities, [Chinese text for this portion illegible], workers can help in the timely buying and collecting of surplus secondary products, and the organizing of labor for secondary products.

What about education, science, cultural activities and drugs? There are people who say, "there is nothing we can do to help except to participate in agricultural labor when the farms are busy and manpower is very necessary." But just to see this point is still not enough and is to oversimplify agriculture. There is much to be done by having cultural and educational elements support agriculture. For example, compile readers, organize technical training classes, help the farmers in culture, logic, and scientific techniques, study with the farmers agricultural technology, help them get rid of pests and diseases, guard their health, and help them in their amateur and cultural recreation. There is much to be done.

It is said, "To support agriculture is only a temporary shock measure." Is this correct? Totally incorrect?

To support agriculture is not a temporary shock measure but long term work. We support agricultural production not only to have a rich harvest this year and next, but what is more important, for agriculture to practice technical improvement, that is to have mechanization, electrification and water conservation. This is very difficult and complicated work and will probably take a period of ten years. How can one say that it is a temporary shock measure! Moreover, there should be constant improvement in agricultural technique, and constant raising of the standard of modernization of agriculture. Therefore the proper attitude for people from various urban businesses and enterprises should be to merge the temporary shock measure with long term support. On the one hand, seize immediate support to serve in the struggle for a rich harvest; and on the other hand, have long term planning for the modernization of agriculture.

The support for agriculture from people of various fields presents a very favorable condition. Rural communes should utilize this condition. But they must not rely on the support of the city alone. No matter how big the support from the city is, it still is a support, and as such it is limited. In struggling for a rich harvest in agriculture, and fighting for early technical improvement, the rural people's communes should rely mainly on their own effort. It is said that "it is good to have two goods merged into one." With the great support of the cities and the development of the spirit of self reliance and willingness to bear hardship on the part of farmers, there can be faster development in agricultural production.

#### Bitter Struggle and Determination to Establish A New Rural Area Under Socialism

When we see the policy of "Agriculture is Basic" clearly, it is not only seen in our work, but in our minds as well. People in large cities and the country all consider agriculture important. They all understand the reason why "Agriculture is Basic," and this is an important reason for the great leap forward in agriculture. But there are a small number of youths who feel the hardship of the village, and they say that village-life cannot be compared to city-life and there is no future in farming. They are unwilling to farm or they are unhappy in agricultural production. These kinds of thoughts are wrong.

Is there any difference in living conditions and production factors between villages and cities? Yes, there is.

But this difference, compared with the old days, is fundamentally different. The difference now is not that the city and village are on opposite sides with city outstripping the village. Furthermore, the difference is still diminishing and it will gradually become extinct. At present, the difference of industry and agriculture in our cities and villages is due to the comparative large gap between industrial and agricultural production. While industry uses machinery, agriculture still uses hoes. This is the fundamental reason for the difference between industry and agriculture. To eliminate the difference, we should have backward agriculture adopt technical improvements in production.

We are revolutionary people and we should take as our own responsibility the reconstruction of agriculture and the rebuilding of our farms. When we see that production on farms and the living standard are still comparatively inferior, we should exert ourselves to narrow this difference. There are many superior cadres and commune members in villages, who use this revolutionary attitude to combat the backwardness of the farms today. Hsiao Ch'uang-sen, leader of the Hsia-tun production brigade, Youth Experimental Farm, Ch'eng Kuan People's Commune in Mi Yun Hsien, is a fine example. After graduating from junior middle school in 1954 he participated in agriculture production. He loves farms, agriculture, and labor and is determined to study agricultural technology. Under the leadership of the Party he dares to act and think independently. In the deserts, where even the rabbits will not stop, he creates miracles of high production in corn and wheat in a few years. He also leads many youths in creating rich fields from barren land with their bare hands. In their determination, they vow to make barren land like land south of the Yangtze River. They do not take a backward step to avoid hardship, but they march forward to face difficulty, creating favorable conditions from unfavorable situations. People like Hsiao Ch'uang-sen are indeed far-sighted young men. He is a good example of the farming youths.

Some young people state, "We know we should struggle and face hardship, but there is no future and no prospect in agriculture." Is it true that agriculture has no future and no prospect? This first depends on the explanation of "future" and "prospect." If your desire is to become an important official and wealthy, then you will not find it on the farm or in the city. If your desire is the future of our concrete enterprise, then agriculture is very promising. Our Party and Chairman Mao point out for us: Industry and agriculture have jointly reached a new level [next line

in Chinese text illegible]. After we practice modernization of agriculture, our agricultural appearance will be thoroughly changed. When agriculture is mechanized, electrified and fully irrigated, the basic difference between the village and city, agriculture and industry, will be narrowed. This is the greatest thing since ancient times. Who is to perform this great task? No one except the people of this generation. How can there be no future and no prospect when we participate in this great task. Indeed, our task is most promising. Every youth with imagination should be determined to undertake the difficult and yet promising task of agricultural modernization.